

More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines and Requirements

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More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines and Requirements

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Section 1: Introduction

The More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program is a program of the NC Office of School Readiness in the NC Department of Public Instruction.

The mission of the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program is to deliver high-quality pre-kindergarten services to prepare at-risk children in North Carolina for school success.

Programs participating in the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program are required to meet high-quality standards. The More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program standards are built on the premise that in order to be successful academically in school, children need to be prepared in all five of the major domains of development outlined by the National Education Goals Panel. Each of these domains is critical to children's well being, in particular for their success in reading and math as they come to school. The five domains, as reflected in *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*, are:

- Approaches to learning
- Emotional and social development
- Health and physical development
- Language development and communication
- Cognitive development

Purpose of the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program

The purpose of the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program is to provide high-quality educational experiences in order to enhance kindergarten readiness for at risk four-year-olds. The Program is community-based, voluntary, and designed to prepare at-risk four-year-olds in North Carolina for success in school.

Purpose of These Program Guidelines and Requirements

These Guidelines and Requirements provide standards and expectations for all More at Four Pre-Kindergarten classrooms. There are seven sections of the Guidelines: (1) Introduction, (2) The County/Region More at Four Committee Composition and Guidelines, (3) The More at Four Child, (4) The More at Four Site, (5) The More at Four Classroom, (6) The More at Four Staff, (7) Evaluation and Monitoring, and (8) Index. They are designed to ensure that a high-quality pre-kindergarten for at-risk four-year-olds is established in each local More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program and that uniformity exists across the state to the extent possible.

Maintaining Compliance with these Program Guidelines and Requirements

All More at Four programs are expected to maintain compliance with the Guidelines and Requirements. Requests for exceptions to the standards and requirements as specified in this document must be made in writing by the More at Four local contractor to the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten State Program.

NC Office of School Readiness
More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program
2075 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2075
919-981-5300 – Phone
919-855-6840 – Fax

The *More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines and Requirements* (revised July 2007), and the *More at Four Program Fiscal and Contract Manual* (revised July 2007) may be downloaded from the More at Four website:

(<http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Office/Education/Home.asp>).

Section 2: The County/Region More at Four Committee Composition and Guidelines

A. Purpose of the More at Four Committee

The authorizing legislation for the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program requires: “a system built upon existing local school boards and systems, private child care providers, and other entities that demonstrate the ability to establish or expand pre-kindergarten capacity.”

In complying with this legislative mandate, the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program requires every county (or region) that chooses to participate in More at Four to establish and maintain a County/Region More at Four Committee. The purpose of the committee is to:

1. select a contractor agency;
2. develop operational policies and procedures;
3. ensure collaboration and shared responsibility for developing, approving, and implementing the local plan for delivering More at Four Pre-K services at the community level;
4. ensure that services are built on the existing early childhood service delivery system and that service providers in the community that have the ability to provide More at Four Pre-K services have the opportunity to express interest and be considered;
5. provide ongoing, collaborative advice about local policies and procedures in the implementation of More at Four Pre-K services; and
6. provide oversight for the local program (both program and fiscal).

B. Committee Structure and Meetings

Co-Chairs

The County/Region More at Four Committee must be co-chaired by the school superintendent (or designee) for the local education agency (LEA) and the board chair (or designee) for the local Smart Start partnership. A designee is to be assigned in writing and must have the same decision-making authority as the school superintendent or local partnership board chair. The contract administrator (person named in the Plan) should not serve as the chair of the More at Four Committee.

If there is more than one LEA or local Smart Start partnership in a county or region, one superintendent and one local Smart Start board chair may be designated to serve as the co-chairs. All superintendents (or designees) and local Smart Start board chairs (or designees) in a county or region must be members of the committee.

Membership

The co-chairs are responsible for appointing the committee members and convening the committee according to these *More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines and Requirements*. Appointments shall be made annually. The co-chairs should jointly create an independent County/Region More at Four Committee, but they may designate another functioning early childhood committee or board in the county/region that has the appropriate

membership to serve in this capacity. However, if an existing committee assumes the County/Region More at Four Committee functions, the *More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines and Requirements* pertaining to co-chairs and membership still apply.

Committee membership must be kept current in the online plan, and should consist of the following:

1. In addition to the co-chairs, representatives to the local More at Four Committee must include:
 - a. licensed child care center (4- or 5-star license preferred) representative,
 - b. Head Start program representative,
 - c. parent of preschool-age children (especially at-risk children) representative,
 - d. child care resource and referral agency or another child-serving agency representative, and
 - e. department of social services or other child care subsidy funding agency representative.
2. The following representatives are strongly encouraged:
 - a. public schools exceptional children's director or exceptional children's preschool coordinator,
 - b. county cooperative extension agency representative,
 - c. local interagency coordinating council representative,
 - d. county/regional departments of health and mental health representative(s),
 - e. early childhood professional organizations representative(s),
 - f. local business community representative(s), and/or
 - g. military representative.

Other members may be included as well.

Meetings

The committee, under the direction of the co-chairs, should set a meeting schedule that allows the committee to fulfill its functions. The committee must maintain minutes of all meetings that document: 1) meeting attendees; 2) items discussed; and 3) actions taken or decisions made.

The committee should establish voting procedures, including a method to resolve any conflicts (e.g., one vote per agency). Decision-making processes, protocol, and voting rules should be determined by the committee.

C. Committee Authority

Actions Requiring Full Committee Approval

The County/Region More at Four Committee is the decision making body for the local More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program and is authorized to do the following (items 1- 14).

Minutes and signatures of all committee members must be submitted to the state office for **actions 1 and 2:**

1. Develop and approve the County/Region Plan for implementing More at Four. Approval of the County/Region Plan Document by the County/Region More at Four Committee serves as validation that (a) all committee members have read and agreed to the Assurances and Requirements, and (b) all site administrators (subcontractors) included in the plan have received and reviewed a copy of the *More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines and Requirements*, and signed an assurance statement that all program requirements will be met for each More at Four classroom.
2. Select or change the contract administrative agency (the Contractor).

Items 3 through 10 require committee approval but do not require the signature of all committee members. The minutes of the Committee meetings should be kept on file and should indicate members present, decisions made, and results of votes.

3. Approve distribution of start-up funding.
4. Review and approve the provider reimbursement strategy (i.e., payment rates to providers and other related costs).
5. Approve provider transportation fees to/from the More at Four program.
6. Approve fees that may be charged to cover the full/partial costs of meals when children do not qualify for free/reduced priced lunch.
7. Approve the release of allocated slots back to the state office.
8. Approve adding new sites to or non-voluntary termination of sites in the County/Region Plan.
9. Approve requests to increase or decrease the budget involving state More at Four funds.
10. Determine the use of unspent More at Four operating funds.

Changes to the County/Region Plan Not Requiring the Full Committee

In cases where decisions must be made before the Committee can be convened, the **contract administrator** and/or **committee co-chairs** may do the following on behalf of the committee. For **action 12**, signatures of the committee co-chairs are required. A report of all actions should be reported back to the Committee.

11. Approve moving slots across sites.
12. Approve requests for new slots (**requires committee chairs' signatures**).
13. Approve the voluntary termination of sites.
14. Approve increases or decreases in the budget involving other resources accessed (but not state *More at Four* funds).

Additional Functions

The committee should serve in an ongoing advisory role to the Contractor in the development and implementation of local policies and procedures for implementing More at Four, which may include:

1. developing a coherent plan to identify and recruit at-risk four-year old children and their families.
2. facilitating the development and implementation of a coordinated system for identifying and placement of eligible at-risk 4 year old children in need of services.

3. encouraging programs to offer their professional development services to other early childhood programs in the community and in turn take advantage of opportunities offered by others.
4. demonstrating and documenting how programs are accessing resources other than *More at Four*.
5. documenting agreements with other community agencies regarding the provision of services to young children with disabilities.
6. identifying and using community resources to develop:
 - transportation plans for More at Four families and children
 - transition plans for More at Four families and children
 - health assessment plans, as well as access to child care health consultants, health insurance and a medical home for More at Four families and children.

Reporting Program Progress

The Contractor must report periodically to the County/Region More at Four Committee on implementation of the County/Region Plan and should include:

1. program progress (recruiting, child identification and eligibility, enrollment, and attendance);
2. site updates (slot allotment and use; star licensure progress);
3. staff education levels and progress (administrators, teachers, assistants);
4. professional development activities;
5. efforts to collaborate with other agencies;
6. strengths and barriers to service delivery; and
7. fiscal and budget reports (funds received, funds paid to subcontractor, and any unspent funds in the More at Four contract, including a plan for use of unspent funds).

Reporting, at a minimum, should occur **by May 31st** of the program year to advise planning for the following year.

Section 3: The More at Four Child

A. More at Four Child Enrollment Eligibility

Children served in a More at Four slot must meet age requirements, income eligibility, or eligibility for children in military families, and service priority criteria as defined in this section.

Age Requirements

1. Children to be enrolled must be four years of age on or before **October 16th** in the year served.
2. Children age eligible for kindergarten cannot be served with More at Four funds.

Eligibility by Income

Eligibility for More at Four is determined by family size and gross income. **Children in families with annual incomes at or below 75% of the State Median Income (SMI) level are eligible for More at Four services (see Table 1).**

Table 1. 75 PERCENT STATE MEDIAN INCOME*	
Family Size	75 Percent State Median Income
1	\$22,709
2	\$29,696
3	\$36,683
4	\$43,670
5	\$50,657
6	\$57,645
7	\$58,955
8	\$60,265
9	\$61,575
10	\$62,885
11	\$64,195
12	\$65,505

*Based on August 1, 2007 North Carolina Subsidized Child Care Eligibility Limits

Eligibility for Families above 75% of State Median Income (SMI)

When a family's gross income exceeds 75% of the State Median Income (SMI), a child is deemed eligible if the following conditions are met. Their gross income is below 300% of poverty* (see Table 2), and they meet one of the criteria listed below:

- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as indicated by the family and/or child speaking limited or no

English in the home

- Identified Disability as indicated by the child having a current Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Chronic Health Condition as indicated by a health care provider diagnosis; e.g., asthma, childhood obesity, sickle cell anemia, cancer, HIV;
- Developmental/Educational Need as indicated by the child performance results on a developmental screen.

Up to **20%** of a county's/region's More at Four slots may be filled by children above the 75% of State Median Income level. Children meeting military eligibility are excluded from this percentage.

*A request for an exception to the 300% poverty cap may be made if compelling evidence exists that the child in question would best be served in the More at Four Program.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Maintenance of Effort (TANF MOE)

When a child is determined eligible for services, a % of poverty category must be determined (see Table 2), entered on the **Eligibility/Enrollment Scorecard** sheet and in MAFKids. **This information will be used to determine TANF MOE.**

Table 2. INCOME ELIGIBILITY LEVELS*					
<i>(More at Four, 2007-08)</i>					
Family Size	130%	185%	200%	250%	300%
1	\$13,273	\$18,889	\$20,420	\$25,525	\$30,630
2	\$17,797	\$25,327	\$27,380	\$34,225	\$41,070
3	\$22,321	\$31,765	\$34,340	\$42,925	\$51,510
4	\$26,845	\$38,203	\$41,300	\$51,625	\$61,950
5	\$31,369	\$44,641	\$48,260	\$60,325	\$72,390
6	\$35,893	\$51,079	\$55,220	\$69,025	\$82,830
7	\$40,417	\$57,517	\$62,180	\$77,725	\$93,270
8	\$44,941	\$63,955	\$69,140	\$86,425	\$103,710
9	\$49,465	\$70,393	\$76,100	\$95,125	\$114,150
10	\$53,989	\$76,831	\$83,060	\$103,825	\$124,590
11	\$58,513	\$83,269	\$90,020	\$112,525	\$135,030
12	\$63,037	\$89,707	\$96,980	\$121,225	\$145,470
* Based on 2007 Federal Poverty Levels (rev. 07.05.07)					

Eligibility for Children in Military Families

A child is eligible for More at Four if at least one parent or legal guardian of this child is an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard) or the North Carolina National Guard or other state military force, or a Reserve Unit of the armed forces who is ordered to active duty by the proper authority within the last 18 months or expected to be ordered within the next 18 months. A child whose parent or legal guardian has been seriously injured or killed while on active duty is also eligible.

B. Service Priority Status

After a pool of eligible children is determined, service priority status (served vs. unserved) should be used to prioritize those children for More at Four services.

1. Unserved Children

- a. Children who have **never** been served in any preschool or child care setting.
- b. Children who are **currently unserved** (previously in preschool or child care setting).
- c. Children served for 5 months or less in the year prior to service in the More at Four program in any preschool or child care setting.

2. Underserved Children

- a. Children who are in unregulated child care that does not meet the More at Four Pre-K standards.
- b. Children who are not receiving subsidy, but are in some kind of regulated preschool or child care setting.
- c. Other children, including those in pre-kindergartens or child care settings that do not meet More at Four program standards. This is the last resort and documentation that children who fit the unserved category were diligently recruited should be available.

3. Exception

Fifty percent (50%) of the More at Four Pre-K slots designated to a site can be used to serve that site's three-year-old children when they become age eligible for More at Four and meet More at Four eligibility requirements.

A County/Region More at Four Committee may make a request to increase the percentage of a site's MAF slots used to maintain services for previously served three-year old children. The request must be made in writing to the state office and provide compelling rationale for the percentage increase.

Children with Disabilities

More at Four programs are encouraged to be inclusive. The value of inclusive settings ensures that each child's strengths, unique learning needs, and abilities are addressed.

Because public schools are required by federal law to provide special education to eligible 4-year-olds, More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Programs, regardless of the setting, and public schools will collaborate in the development and implementation of a child's IEP (Individualized Education Program).

More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Eligibility/Enrollment Scorecard

(REVISED; Effective August 6, 2007)

Date Completed: _____

Child's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: () _____

STEP ONE: Eligibility Factors

- 1) Will the child be four years of age on or before **October 16th** of the year served?
☐ **No (Child not eligible; discontinue scorecard.)**
☐ **Yes (Move to question 2.)**
- 2) What is the annual family gross income? _____ What is the family size? _____
- 3) Does the family's income fall at or below 75% of the State Median Income (SMI)?
☐ **No (Move to question 4.)**
☐ **Yes (Child is eligible; complete tables A and B; THEN determine priority.)**
- 4) a) Does the family's income fall above 75% of SMI, **but** at or below 300% of the federal poverty level?
Up to 20% of a county's/region's More at Four slots may be filled with children from families with incomes above the 75% of State Median Income level. Children meeting military eligibility are excluded from this percentage. An exception request to the 300% poverty cap may be made if compelling evidence exists that the child in question would best be served in the MAF program.
☐ **No (Move to question 5.)**
☐ **Yes (Complete table A, and then continue to question 4b.)**
- b) Is one item checked on table A?
☐ **No (Move to question 5.)**
☐ **Yes (Child is eligible*; complete table B; THEN determine priority.)**
- 5) Is at least one parent or legal guardian of this child an active duty member of the military, or was a parent or legal guardian of this child seriously injured or killed while on active duty?
☐ **No (Child is not eligible.)**
☐ **Yes (Child is eligible; complete tables A and B; THEN determine priority.)**

TABLE A		
Check one box for each:	Yes	No
Child of eligible military family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited English Proficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identified Disability (IEP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chronic Health Condition(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developmental/Educational Need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TABLE B (TANF/MOE only)	Check one
130% of poverty and below	<input type="checkbox"/>
131 - 185% of Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>
186 - 200% of Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>
201 - 250% of Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>
251 - 300% of Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>

STEP TWO: Service Priority Status (Circle only one.)

UNSERVED	UNDERSERVED
1a. Child has never been served in any preschool or child care setting.	2a. Child in unregulated care ; does not meet More at Four standards .
1b. Child currently unserved .	2b. Child not receiving subsidy; in regulated preschool or child care.
1c. Child served for 5 months or less in the year prior to service in the More at Four program in any preschool or child care setting.	2c. Child currently being served in settings that do <u>not</u> meet More at Four program standards.
	Exception: Eligible 3-year-old child moving up to fill a MAF slot.; 50% limit for each site.

C. Child Information and Documentation

During the application process, at a minimum, the following elements and appropriate documentation identified in the chart below must be collected for each child and family. This information will serve two purposes: (1) to determine More at Four eligibility, and (2) to determine TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) for the state to determine TANF Maintenance of Effort (MOE) contributions.

Element	Definitions and Recommended Documentation for Verification
	Parent, guardian or caregiver statement substantiated by parent, guardian or caregiver signature is required for income, family size, kinship and employment.
Child's Name	Parent, guardian or caregiver statement.
Birth Date	Child's birth certificate, or medical records, or recorded in Family Bible
Child's SS Number	Child's social security card, if applicable.
County	County of child's residence as documented on child's application.
Family Income (To convert weekly income to annual, multiply weekly by 4.3 to obtain monthly, then by 12 for annual.)	Count parent or stepparent's regular gross income. Regular gross income may include income earned through sales commissions averaged over several months, regular employment through a temporary employment agency, child support, alimony payments, and workman's compensation. Excluded from regular gross income are parent, stepparent and child Supplemental Security Income, adoptive assistance, foster care payments, and irregular income (e.g., over-time, temporary unemployment pay, Work First, Food Stamps, student loans). If legal guardian, legal custodian, or other caregiver, only count the child's income, including Social Security Income and Child Support Payments. Do not count Supplemental Security Income. Count income from any <u>minor</u> siblings living in the home.
Military Status	Parent, guardian or caregiver statement.
Family Size (Number in Family: parents, stepparents, all siblings)	Include the following individuals living in the child's home: 1. The More at Four child plus all minor brothers and sisters, half brothers, half sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters. 2. Parents and stepparents of these children. 3. Incarcerated or institutionalized individuals are <u>not</u> included. 4. If a child is living with a relative like a grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc., or an individual who has <u>legal custody</u> or <u>legal guardianship</u> , then the family size consists of the More at Four child, plus all minor brothers and sisters, half brothers, half sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters. The adults are <u>not</u> included, nor are the children of these adults counted.
Kinship	Kinship is established when the child in care lives with an adult blood relative or with a non-relative who has legal custody or guardianship. If child is living with non-relatives or other adults that have legal custody or guardianship, guardian must present a <u>legal document</u> verifying they have <u>legal custody</u> or <u>guardianship</u> . 1. A parent - This includes a natural mother or father, a legal father, or adoptive parent(s) after issuance of the final order of adoption. 2. An alleged father or other alleged paternal relative. 3. A blood or half-blood relative or adoptive relative limited to: brother, sister, grandparent, great-grandparent, great-great-grandparent, uncle or aunt, great-uncle or aunt, great-great-uncle or aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin. 4. A step relative limited to: stepparent, stepbrother, and stepsister. 5. Spouses of anyone in the above groups, even after the marriage has been terminated by death or divorce. 6. Other adults who have legal custody or guardianship of a child. Foster parents do not have legal custody or guardianship; custody remains with the Department of Social Services.

D. Children with Challenging Behaviors

In special cases where a child may appear **chronically disruptive** or **harmful** to him/herself or others, administrators, teachers, and parents must work together to develop a plan to support the family and child's placement in the More at Four program.

More at Four programs should make every effort to **maintain a child's enrollment and participation**. Local programs are encouraged to first seek guidance and access any and all resources available to the child and his/her family to support the More at Four placement, including contacting the State More at Four Office for assistance as needed.

If it becomes necessary to find another placement for a child, the More at Four State Program must be notified. Any decision regarding expulsion must include state-level representatives of the More at Four Program.

(See Procedures Regarding Children with Challenging Behaviors
<http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Office/Education/Home.asp>; Program Information/Supplemental Materials to the Guidelines)

Section 4: The More at Four Site

A. Facility Licensing Requirements

Each participating More at Four classroom must be located in a facility that meets the requirements for a 4- or 5-star licensed center using the Division of Child Development licensing standards. More at Four classrooms may be placed in 4- or 5-star licensed **public** and **nonpublic** schools. **Nonpublic** schools are defined as **private for-profit child care centers, not-for-profit child care centers, and Head Start programs operated by nonprofit organizations**. Public schools are defined as **public pre-kindergarten programs and Head Start programs operated by public schools**.

Exceptions

1. **Licensed three-star child care centers and Head Start programs (Nonpublic Schools):**
Three-star centers must work to attain a rating of at least 4 stars to continue participation in the More at Four Pre-K Program. A period of **3 years** will be granted for programs to move to a 4- or 5-star level.
2. **Non-licensed public school pre-kindergarten programs (Public Schools):** Public school pre-school programs that are not licensed under the Division of Child Development's star-rated licensing system may participate in the More at Four Pre-K Program. However, the Office of School Readiness/More at Four State Program strongly recommends that such programs come into compliance with 4- or 5-star licensure.

Participating non-licensed public pre-kindergarten programs are required to use developmentally appropriate practices in managing and redirecting children's behavior, which does not include the use of corporal punishment.

B. Service Delivery

Official More at Four Day and Year

1. More at Four Pre-Kindergarten sites must provide a pre-kindergarten program for a regular school day (e.g., 6 or 6 ½ hours) for a 10-month (180 instructional days a year) **school calendar year**. If a More at Four site is not located in the public schools, the hours of operation should be consistent with the school system in the geographic area where the site is located. Additionally, the site's 180-day schedule should generally track the local public school calendar. If there is a need to deviate, the More at Four provider must submit a specific 180-day calendar to the local More at Four contractor.
2. Days set aside for home visits and staggered entry at the beginning of the school year, may be included as part of the 180-day school calendar year.

Program Attendance Policy

1. Child attendance must be taken each day of the More at Four program year.
2. A child may be considered in attendance and recorded as present in MAFKids when:
 - a. He/she is present for the majority of 6-6½ hour More at Four program day.
 - b. A home/community setting visit is conducted to meet with the child/family for

initial program orientation and/or educational purposes (written documentation required).

Local programs are encouraged to work with families to support the child's attendance and participation in More at Four. When a child has been absent for **three** consecutive days, the More at Four site administrator should contact the family and determine the child's participation status. Local More at Four site administrators must document attempts to contact the family, as well as decisions regarding the child's continued participation in the program. Every effort should be made to maintain the child's placement and participation in More at Four.

Attendance Requirement for Payment Purposes

A child slot will be considered filled for payment purposes with **four** recorded attendance days within one month.

A child slot will be considered filled for payment purposes with **one** recorded attendance day within one month in the following situations:

1. First and last month of classroom operation (limited attendance days available). **The State Office will automatically apply (no exception necessary).**
2. Child enrolled at/near the end of month (limited attendance days available). **The State Office will automatically apply (no exception necessary).**
3. Special circumstances warrant an exception: e.g., child involved in debilitating accident or has prolonged illness limiting on-site More at Four participation. **Exception requests must be made in writing by the Contract Administrator and submitted to the Chief of Budget and Analysis, Office of School Readiness, for consideration and approval. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.**

If a child is served at two different sites within the same month and meets the attendance requirement for payment purposes for both, payment may be made to each site serving the child. **Payment will not exceed the number of slots in the approved plan for a contractor.**

Contractors receive monthly payments for filled slots by submitting a ***Request for Payment (M@4-1 Rev 7/07)***. The OSR State Office will review the Contractor's request verifying accuracy and conformance to the Plan before payment is made.

C. Program Fees

The only fees that may be charged to More at Four families for services are nominal fees for transporting children to/from the More at Four program, or fees to cover the partial/full costs of meals when families do not qualify for free/reduced priced meals.

Wraparound Services and Fees

More at Four dollars may not be used to pay for wraparound services (time periods before or after the regular school day). When wraparound services are provided before and/or after the regular school day, during holidays, or summer months, the provider may charge a fee for that service or accept a subsidy voucher from a participating family. (See Division of Child Development - Subsidy Questions and Answers Related to the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Programs <http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Office/Education/Home.asp>; Program Information/Supplemental

Materials to the Guidelines)

Transportation Plan and Fees

Plan. A written plan showing how the transportation needs of potential children to be served shall be **developed by the contractor and/or sites**. Legislation allows for transportation of any More at Four child to any More at Four site on public school buses. If, after careful review, it is determined that transportation cannot be provided, the contractor must maintain a written record of what was decided.

Fees. Resources may include the use of More at Four funds for the More at Four portion of the day. In particular instances and, **as approved by the More at Four Committee**, families may be charged a nominal fee to offset transportation cost. Eligible children should not be denied services based on the family's inability to pay for transportation services.

D. Nutrition

Programs must provide breakfast and/or snacks and lunch meeting USDA requirements during the regular school day. Fees may be charged to cover the full/partial costs of meals when children do not qualify for free/reduced priced lunch.

E. Transitions

Written transition plans should be developed by the **More at Four contractor and/or sites** and should:

1. Specify how children will transition into the More at Four classroom.
2. Specify how children will transition into kindergarten.
3. Reflect the diversity and uniqueness of children, families and communities.
4. Be revised as ongoing transition efforts are expanded.

F. Religious Activities in Child Care Centers that accept More at Four Funding

If a child care center accepts funding from More at Four, then to be consistent with various judicial decisions, during the time the center is offering More at Four programs, staff activities or communications which promote religious beliefs or activities cannot be directed toward More at Four participants. This includes but is not limited to worship services, teacher-led prayer, or religious instruction. Furthermore, various court rulings suggest that More at Four participants must be insulated from religious communications or activities that may occur in other parts of the center during that time. More at Four participants shall not be prevented from engaging in their personal religious practices, provided those practices are not initiated by center staff and do not disrupt the instructional environment.

Section 5: The More at Four Classroom

A. Developmental Screening for Enrolled Children: Domains and Instruments

All children entering a More at Four Program should be screened within **ninety (90) days of the first day of attendance** in the program.

The screening provides teachers information on children's developmental status and the possible need for further evaluation. Early detection is essential to increasing the likelihood that children at risk of developmental delay and those with disabilities receive special services quickly.

Programs are encouraged to screen children who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency in their native language, preferably using instruments that are available in the child's native language and by a bilingual/bicultural assessor.

Exception

1. Screenings completed at the time of the child's application for More at Four will meet this requirement.
2. Children with an existing **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** are exempt from this requirement.

Developmental screening instruments selected for use address four of the five domains listed in the Introduction, **page 1-1**; the exception is "approaches to learning." This domain area is observed by teachers and should be part of ongoing instructional assessment (See **Section 5. D. Instructional Components and Standards**) and addressed by instructional strategies.

More at Four programs should choose from the following list of screening instruments. Other instruments can be considered for screening and ongoing assessment as requested and approved by the state office.

1. The following approved instruments screen for all four developmental domains:

- Developmental Indicators of Assessment of Learning-3 (DIAL-3)
- Brigance® Preschool Screen-II (for children 3 years, 0 months – 3 years, 11 months and 4 years, 0 months – 4 years, 11 months) (revised 2005)
- Brigance® K & 1 Screen - II (for children 5 years, 0 months – 5 years, 11 months) (revised 2005)
- Learning Accomplishment Profile Diagnostic Screens (LAP-D Normed Screens – versions in English and Spanish for children 3, 4, or 5 years)

2. The following approved instruments do not screen behavioral and social skills, and should be supplemented by one instrument listed below to do so:

- Kaufman Survey of Early Academic & Language Skills (K-SEAL)
- Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-P) (Preschool ages 3-4 ½ years)
- Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-K) (Kindergarten ages 4 ½ - 6 years)

The following are supplemental to the instruments in item 2 above

- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Program (DECA)
- Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)

B. Child Health Assessments

Health assessments will be required of children entering the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program in accordance with the following provisions:

1. The health assessment must be in place on the first day of attendance. If it is not in place, the family/parent is given written notice to:
 - a. Have the assessment completed within 30 calendar days of the notice date, or
 - b. Request parent/family to provide written evidence within 30 days of a date that the child has been scheduled for the health assessment.
2. If the assessment is not completed within 30 calendar days, or an appointment has not been made or has not been kept for the child's health assessment, the parent/family should be notified by the contract administrator that the child will lose their More at Four placement, and the slot will be filled by another eligible child with the appropriate health assessment, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
3. Programs may request an exception based on extenuating circumstances.
4. A child's last allowable Medicaid health assessment will meet this requirement.

The health assessment will be the same as that required of children entering kindergarten and include:

1. Physical examination
2. Up-dated immunizations [Parents may request exemption for immunizations based on religious grounds.]
3. *Vision screening
4. *Hearing screening
5. *Dental screening

*Dental and other screenings may be completed during the child's physical exam. Information included on the health assessment should be consistent with information collected on the **Kindergarten Health Assessment Report**. Local programs are encouraged but not required to use this form, which is available through the local health departments and public schools (**Form # PPS-2K Rev. 1/07**).

The *health provider* is responsible for making appropriate referrals as indicated by the health assessments.

Health Assessment Plan

Local programs are encouraged but not required to develop a written plan for obtaining child health assessments within the required timeframe. The plan would include notifying all families at the time of application to the program that the child's health assessment is expected by the first day of attendance. Local programs are encouraged to work with the parent/family to coordinate transportation and other appropriate resources, such as the public health department, public school health nurse, child care health consultants, and other health care and medical consultants, in the community to help families meet this requirement.

C. Access to Health Insurance and Medical Home

Local programs should work with the local More at Four Committee and other community health care resources (e.g., Child Care Health Consultants or Health Check coordinators) to assist families in securing health insurance and a medical home (primary health care provider) for their child.

At a minimum, programs will give families information about the Health Check and NC Health Choice health insurance programs and about the importance of a medical home. The More at Four Contractor will ensure that this information is available for all families of children served by More at Four. The information may be distributed: 1) at a county wide event; 2) at the site level; and/or 3) directly to families. In addition, programs may also choose to give families a list of local primary health care providers.

D. Instructional Components and Standards

Early Learning Standards

Local More at Four programs are expected to provide developmentally appropriate, high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences for children. Such experiences are supported by *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*. These expectations define the areas of child growth and development that should be the focus of daily activities. See <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/success/downloads/foundations.pdf>

Curricula for More at Four Pre-K Programs

Curricula that have been reviewed and recommended to date include:

- Bright Beginnings Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum (version 2, 2001)
- The Creative Curriculum for Preschool (third edition, 2000; or fourth edition, 2002)
- Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs (High/Scope) (second edition 2002)
- The Montessori Method
- Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College (copyright 1992)
- Opening the World of Learning (copyright 2005)

Curricula and daily activities are the tools used by instructional staff to provide opportunities for children's learning as described in the widely held expectations of *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*.

Training in appropriate use of curriculum should be part of initial staff development for all teaching staff that have not previously completed appropriate training. Ongoing staff development should also provide support related to implementing the curriculum.

Instructional Assessment

Ongoing assessment for instructional purposes is an integral part of high-quality programs and is required for More at Four children. Such assessments provide feedback about instruction and

evidence of child growth and skill development. Both formal and informal assessments can achieve this goal. The following instruments are recommended.

Recommended assessment instruments:

- High Scope Child Observation Record (COR) (second edition)
- Work Sampling System (Meisels)
- Creative Curriculum Assessment Tool
- Galileo On-line Assessment System
- Learning Accomplishment Profile – Third Edition (LAP-3)

Training in appropriate use of screening and assessment instruments for instructional planning should be part of initial staff development for all teaching staff that have not previously completed appropriate training on these instruments.

E. Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size

A More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program will not exceed a maximum staff-to-child ratio of 1 to 9 with a maximum class size of 18 children, with one teacher and one assistant teacher per classroom. Programs that provide for inclusive settings for children with disabilities may require an adult to child ratio smaller than 1 to 9 depending on the nature and severity of the disabilities of children served. Programs serving children that do not speak English, have limited English proficiency, or a chronic health condition may also require an adult to child ratio smaller than 1 to 9.

Rest Time and Staff-to-Child Ratios

More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Programs are encouraged to use developmentally appropriate practices for rest times, based on the child's health and physical needs and the length of the school day.

During rest time, More at Four classrooms will be considered in compliance with the required 1 to 9 staff-to-child ratio, if at least one staff is in the classroom with children while resting, and that person is visually supervising all children. The second person needed to meet the 1 to 9 ratio must be on the premises, within calling distance of the classroom, to remain in compliance.

Teacher Absences and Staff-to-Child Ratios

When a teacher or assistant teacher is absent from the More at Four classroom for any reason, except rest time as described in the previous section, a substitute must be assigned to the classroom to maintain the required staff-to-child ratio of 1 to 9. **(See Section 6. E. Substitute Staff)**

F. Family Involvement

Family involvement is critical to the success of children during the pre-kindergarten year and in subsequent years. Programs shall provide meaningful opportunities for parents and families that build trusting relationships and foster a bond between those involved in the education of the More at Four child. While **not required**, the following types of activities might be considered:

1. Home visits (initial and ongoing).
2. Staggered enrollment into the Pre-k classrooms, as well as into kindergarten at the end of the Pre-K year.

3. Parent/teacher conferences.
4. Classroom visits, with options for parents to participate.
5. Parent education (e.g., development of parent centers, one-on-one, classes, community resources such as “Parents as Teachers”).
6. Process for family involvement in decision making about their own children.
7. Opportunities outside of the regular school day.
8. Local More at Four families may be included in a program’s fund raising activity if the following conditions are met:
 - (a) Families are notified that participation in a program’s fund raising activities is **voluntary** and **will not affect** the child’s placement and participation in More at Four.
 - (b) Local programs should maintain documentation verifying that families were informed of their right to participate or decline participation in the activity.

Section 6: The More at Four Staff

A. Administrator Requirements

1. Public Schools

- a. Principal licensure is required.
- b. All principals/directors are encouraged to hold a BS degree or complete coursework in ECE/CD.

2. Nonpublic Schools (Private Child Care/Pre-Kindergarten Settings)

Directors/administrators of nonpublic schools must have a **North Carolina Early Childhood Administrative Credential (NCECAC) Level III**. When the director/administrator has less than the required **NCECAC Level III**, the following will apply:

- a. Provisional approval will be given for **four years** for the director/administrator with **NCECAC I or II** to obtain the **NCECAC Level III**.
- b. Progress toward NCECAC Level III will be considered a minimum of six documented semester hours per year. The local More at Four contractor will maintain documentation of the progress toward the required standard.
- c. Administrators showing good faith effort toward meeting the credential requirement may be granted an extension to the four-year timeline. Local programs must request the extension in writing directed to the More at Four State Program.

Administrators of More at Four sites shall not serve as the More at Four teacher.

B. Instructional Staff Standards

Instructional staff is expected to work in direct contact with children in the More at Four programs for at least a 30-hour work week. In addition to direct, day-to-day instructional activities, instructional staff will need additional time during the work week for other instructional related activities, including time for planning, scheduling and conducting home visits, meeting with children's families, and/or attending required professional development activities. These related activities should take place outside the 6 – 6 ½ hour day, and should not exceed 40 hours per week. Local programs will determine the length of the staff day and year based on meeting staff's ongoing professional development needs (**See Section 6. H. Professional Development for More at four Staff**).

Private programs providing More at Four Pre-Kindergarten services are encouraged to refer to the state labor laws pursuant to the N.C. Wage and Hour Act (www.nclabor.com/wh/wh.htm) and to federal labor laws pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act (www.dol.gov/esa/whd), regarding questions about wage and hour rules and employment classification (i.e., exempt versus non-exempt) of More at Four instructional staff based on educational degrees and credentials.

C. Teacher Education, Licensure and Credentials

All teachers will hold Birth-through-Kindergarten (B-K) **Standard Professional II** or Preschool Add-on licensure. When teachers have less than the required education and license, the following requirements apply:

1. Provisional Approval

a. Public Schools

Teachers will hold at least a:

(i) BA/BS degree and Lateral Entry License and be working toward B-K Standard Professional I.

or

(ii) Another NC or other state's license and a Provisional B-K license and be working toward B-K Standard Professional I or Preschool Add-on licensure.

b. Nonpublic Schools (Private Child Care/Pre-Kindergarten Settings)

(i) Teachers will hold a minimum of an Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE/CD) associate degree and be working toward B-K licensure.

or

(ii) Teachers will hold a BA/BS degree in early childhood, child development, or a related field, and a Lateral Entry License and be working toward B-K licensure.

Related fields include human development and family studies and psychology.

or

(iii) Another NC or other state's license and a Provisional B-K license and be working toward B-K Standard Professional I or Preschool Add-on Licensure.

Teachers granted initial licensure through the Office of School Readiness Teacher Licensure Unit (OSR/TLU) (e.g., Lateral Entry, Provisional B-K, or B-K Standard Professional I (SP I) licensure are subject to the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) Teacher Licensure Policy. These initially licensed teachers who work in nonpublic school More at Four classrooms should work through the OSR/TLU to complete the requirements of the Lateral Entry Teacher Program (LETP) and/or the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP), to obtain B-K Standard Professional II (SP II) licensure.

c. Time Limit for Classroom to have B-K Licensed Teacher

(i) Programs will be given up to four years from the time the classroom becomes a More at Four classroom to have a **B-K Standard Professional I (SP I)** licensed teacher or a teacher who meets **Lateral Entry Licensure** in place. After this time the classroom will have a **B-K Standard Professional I** licensed teacher or funding for that class **may** not be approved.

(ii) Progress toward **B-K Standard Professional I or Pre-school Add-on licensure** will be considered a minimum of six documented semester hours per

year. The local More at Four Contractor will maintain documentation of the progress towards the required standard.

(iii) If teacher(s) show good faith effort(s) toward meeting the **licensure** requirement, programs may be granted an extension to the four-year timeline. Local programs must request the extension in writing directed to the More at Four State Program.

2. Serving as Administrators

Teachers in More at Four classrooms shall not serve as the administrator of the child care center while assigned to a More at Four classroom.

D. Teacher Assistant Requirements

All assistants will hold an Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE/CD) associate degree or a CDA (Child Development Associate) credential. When teacher assistants have less than an ECE/CD associate degree or CDA, the following requirements apply:

a. Provisional Approval – Nonpublic Schools (Private Child Care/Pre-Kindergarten Settings)

- (i) Assistants will hold a high school diploma or GED equivalent and be working toward the ECE/CD associate degree or CDA (minimum).
- (ii) Progress toward the ECE/CD associate degree or CDA will be considered a minimum of six documented semester hours per year.

b. Exception

- (i) **Public schools:** Teacher assistants employed by public schools are exempt from this requirement to hold an ECE/CD associate degree or CDA if they meet the following:
 - a. Meet employment requirements outlined by the federal “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) legislation, and have one of the following:
 - i. Six documented semester hours of coursework in early childhood education, **or**
 - ii. Two years of work experience in an early childhood setting.
- (ii) **Nonpublic schools:** Teacher assistants working in private settings with a BS/BA degree in early childhood or child development or a related field (as defined by the local education agency) would meet the education requirement.

E. Substitute Staff

When a member of the More at Four teaching staff is unable to work, a substitute staff must be provided to maintain the staff-to-child ratio (1:9 and 2:18), and to implement the program in accordance with More at Four guidelines. Substitute staff must be at least 18 years of age and meet the minimum qualifications as defined below:

a. Teacher Substitutes

- (i) **Short-term vacancies** - Teachers absent from the More at Four classroom **15 or fewer attendance days**:

(a) Nonpublic Schools (Private Child Care/Pre-Kindergarten Settings)

Substitutes in private settings must have at least a high school diploma or a GED, and some course work in early childhood education or child development, such as the North Carolina Early Childhood Credentials I and II.

(b) Public School Settings would follow the substitute policy consistent with the LEA (local education agency).

- (ii) **Long-term vacancies** - Teachers absent from the More at Four classroom for **16 or more attendance days**, regardless of the program setting, due to maternity or family leave, extended illness, or participation in a semester-long course to meet education standards require substitutes with at least an associate's degree in early childhood/child development or 4-year degree in a related field (child development, early childhood education, elementary education, human development and family studies, or psychology).

b. Teacher Assistant Substitutes

The teacher assistant substitute must be at least 18 years of age and have at least a high school diploma or a GED.

The LEA (Local Education Agency) is encouraged to share substitute teacher lists with local child care and Head Start programs providing More at Four services, and other **nonpublic schools** are encouraged to share their substitute teacher lists with the public schools.

F. Compensation for Instructional Staff

Compensation includes all salary, wages, health **and/or** retirement benefits paid to eligible More at Four teachers and teacher assistants working in public and non public school More at Four pre-k programs as defined in this Section.

Teacher Eligibility

1. Teachers who work in **public school** More at Four pre-k programs will receive salaries based on the NC Public School Salary Schedule for Certified Staff, and receive health and retirement benefits offered through the NC State Health Plan and NC State Retirement System.
2. Teachers who work in **nonpublic school** More at Four pre-k programs and currently hold one of the following licenses are eligible to receive a compensation package as defined in **Table 3**.
 - a. NC Birth-Kindergarten License, Standard Professional I (BK SP I - initial licensure) **or** Standard Professional II (BK SP II - full licensure), **or**
 - b. NC Pre-school Add-on License, **or**
 - c. NC Provisional Birth-Kindergarten License (currently hold another NC teaching license), **or**
 - d. NC Lateral Entry Birth-Kindergarten License (at least a (a) BA/BS degree in EC/CD or (b) a related field or (c) other degree and an additional 24 semester hours in EC/CD, and (d) at least a 2.5 GPA)

Teacher Assistant Eligibility

1. Teacher assistants working in **public school** More at Four pre-k programs will receive salaries based on the NC Public School Salary Schedule for Non-Certified Staff, and receive health and retirement benefits offered through the NC State Health Plan and NC State Retirement System.
2. Teacher assistants who work in **nonpublic school** More at Four pre-k programs and exceed More at Four education requirements (currently hold AA/AAS in ECE) are eligible to receive a compensation package as defined in **Table 4**.

Compensation Packages for Nonpublic School Programs

1. Compensation packages must be equivalent to at least the **minimum compensation level** for eligible teachers and teacher assistants, as defined in **Tables 3 and 4**. The package may consist of a, b, or c and equal to the package amount.
 - a. Salary **only**, or
 - b. Salary **plus** health **or** retirement plans, **or**
 - c. Salary **plus** health **and** retirement plans.
2. Local nonpublic school More at Four programs have **up to five years (SFY 2010 - 2011)** to move eligible teachers and teacher assistants from the **minimum to the target compensation level**, based on available state and local fiscal resources.
3. Teachers with less than the required education and experience, and teacher assistants with less than an associate's degree in early childhood education, who work in nonpublic school More at Four programs, should be compensated based on salary and benefit targets defined by the local site administrator.

Hold Harmless Clause

Local nonpublic school programs may not reduce the compensation package of any More at Four teacher or teacher assistant employed in that program prior to 2006-2007.

**Table 3. Compensation Packages for Eligible Teachers Working in Nonpublic School Programs
B-K Licensure, Pre-school Add-on Licensure, Lateral Entry, or Provisional B-K Licensure**
Compensation levels will be adjusted annually based on the NC Public School Salary Schedules.

Experience	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Minimum Compensation	\$26,260	\$26,680	\$27,120	\$28,680	\$30,080	\$31,420	\$32,710	\$33,750	\$34,230	\$34,720	\$35,220	\$35,710	\$36,220	\$36,730	\$37,260	\$37,800
Compensation Target	\$30,900	\$31,322	\$31,786	\$33,392	\$34,834	\$36,215	\$37,543	\$38,615	\$39,109	\$39,614	\$40,129	\$40,633	\$41,159	\$41,684	\$42,230	\$42,786

Notes

- Minimum and Maximum Compensation Target (Salary and Benefits) Packages** based on North Carolina Public School Salary Schedules for Certified Employees - Bachelor's Degree Certified Teacher Salary **Schedule 5th Pay Period 2005-2006**.
- Health benefit calculation based on 2005-2006 NC State Health Plan rate **\$321 per month** (12 months of employment).
- Retirement benefit calculation based on **3% of annual salary**.
- Compensation scale assumes a 40-hour work week for 36 weeks (10-month school year) (1,440 hours: includes 6-6 ½ hours direct child contact, plus related instructional planning, home visits, family conferences, professional development activities – See Section 6. b).
- Employer and employee state and federal taxes are not included in these figures.
- County supplements are determined by the Local MAF Committee.
- Lateral Entry (B-K) Licensure** – Granted to a teacher with a BA/BS degree in child development, early childhood or a related field (human development and family studies, and psychology), and at least a 2.5 GPA. Upon completion of B-K requirements teacher recommended for a B-K Standard Professional I or II license.
- Provisional B-K Licensure** – Granted to a teacher with another North Carolina license. Ex: Teacher with K-6 license approved for a provisional B-K. Upon completion of B-K requirements teacher recommended for a B-K Standard Professional I or II license.
- Teaching Experience** – One year of full time (at least 30 hours/week) teaching experience in a public or nonpublic setting is given for each increment (step) on the state salary schedule. Experience is determined by the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) at the time the license is issued. Teachers should be placed at the “0” level of experience until the DPI Licensure Section computes “years of experience,” which are denoted on the license document mailed to the teacher. Teacher’s salary would move to the appropriate step of **Table 3** upon receipt of license.

**Table 4. Compensation Packages for Teacher Assistants Working in Nonpublic School Programs
AA/AAS Degree in Early Childhood Education**
Compensation levels will be adjusted annually based on the NC Public School Salary Schedules.

Experience	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Minimum Compensation	\$15,810	\$16,063	\$16,328	\$17,267	\$18,110	\$18,917	\$19,693	\$20,319	\$20,608	\$20,903	\$21,204	\$21,499	\$21,806	\$22,114	\$22,433	\$22,758
Compensation Target	\$20,136	\$20,397	\$20,670	\$21,637	\$22,505	\$23,337	\$24,136	\$24,781	\$25,078	\$25,382	\$25,692	\$25,996	\$26,312	\$26,629	\$26,958	\$27,293

Revised September 13, 2006 – Minimum Compensation and Compensation Target (based on a 10-month school year)

Notes

1. **Minimum and Maximum Compensation Target (Salary & Benefits) Packages** based on Fiscal Year **2005-2006** North Carolina Public Schools Salary Schedules - Curriculum Support Personnel Salary Grades for Teacher Assistants with at least AA/AAS degree.
2. Health benefit calculation based on **2005-2006** NC State Health Plan rate **\$321 per month** (12 months of employment).
3. Retirement benefit calculation based on 3% of annual salary.
4. Compensation scale assumes a **40-hour work week for 36 weeks (10-month school year)**. More at Four teacher assistants work 37.5 – 40 hours a week for 36 weeks.
5. Employer and employee state and federal taxes are not included in these figures.
6. **Teaching Experience** – One year of full time teaching assistant experience (at least 30 hours/week) in a public or nonpublic setting is given for each step in **Table 4**.

G. Bilingual Staff

Programs that serve children and families who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency are encouraged to hire bilingual staff if at all possible.

H. Professional Development for More at Four Staff

State Level

The More at Four Pre-K State Program will offer professional development opportunities for teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators, to the extent feasible and that funds are available. Contractors, subcontractors – including principals and directors – and classroom staff may be required to participate in professional development specified by the Office of School Readiness.

Teachers with Lateral Entry, Provisional B-K, or B-K Standard Professional I licensure are subject to the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) Teacher Licensure Policy and procedures, which requires teachers to participate in other orientation, training, and ongoing professional development activities.

1. Public Schools. Lateral entry teachers working in a public school More at Four classrooms will follow the Local Education Agency's (LEA) professional development plan.
2. Nonpublic Schools. Lateral entry teachers in nonpublic More at Four classrooms who are participating in the Lateral Entry Teacher Program (LETP) and the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) will follow the Office of School Readiness-Teacher Licensure Unit (TLU) professional development plan.

Local Level

Local professional development opportunities for More at Four teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators should, at a minimum, include (to the extent feasible and that funds are available):

1. Orientation session for new teachers, assistants, and administrators that provides an overview of the focus and purpose of the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program, program requirements, and program elements.
2. Ongoing professional development by qualified presenters **and** based on the needs of the staff **and**, at a minimum, address the following topics:
 - Facilitating child growth, development and learning
 - Providing a developmentally appropriate learning environment (understanding and implementing designated curriculum)
 - Fostering self-regulation in children
 - Implementing developmentally appropriate assessment strategies (developmental screening; ongoing assessment tools or strategies)
 - Effectively communicating and participating within the educational environment (professional roles/standards; reflective practice; essential roles of family members in children's development and learning; building family and community relationships)

3. **Up to five of the 180 More at Four service days** may be used for county/region sponsored professional development, to the extent that additional hardships are not created for children and families in the More at Four classroom. More at Four staff may attend more than five days of professional development during the school year, but **no more than five service days** can be set aside for this purpose.

Such professional development may supplement similar offerings by the NC Office of School Readiness.

Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring

A. ECERS-R Assessments

1. More at Four Pre-Kindergarten classrooms will be assessed using the **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)**.
2. The More at Four State Program will be responsible for contracting for the classroom assessments and selecting classrooms for the assessments. To the extent possible, classrooms will be assessed in their second year of operation as a More at Four classroom.
3. More at Four classrooms located in sites scheduled for a rated license assessment, in accordance with the Division of Child Development regulations, and receive an ECERS-R assessment as a part of that process, will meet this requirement. Classrooms not selected for an assessment, during the rated license process, will be scheduled for an assessment at a later time. Additional assessments may be requested by the More at Four State Program, as indicated by previous assessment scores and ongoing program monitoring.
4. Classrooms must score a **minimum of 5.0** on the ECERS-R during the first (second year of operation) and any subsequent evaluations, effective SFY 2007-2008.

Classrooms not meeting the minimum program standard on the ECERS-R

5. Classrooms scoring **less than the minimum program standard** on the ECERS-R evaluation must develop and submit an **Enhancement Plan and/or Intervention Plan** to improve environment quality and a timeline that describes how at least the minimum rating will be achieved by the following year of operation.
 - a. **Initial Classroom Assessment - less than minimum standard:** An **Enhancement Plan** is required when the classroom ECERS-R score does not meet the minimum program standard (5.0) on the first classroom assessment.
 - b. **Subsequent Classroom Assessment - less than minimum standard:** A more intensive **Intervention Plan** is required for a classroom that scores less than the minimum (5.0) during the follow-up evaluation as a part of the Enhancement Plan process.
 - c. The **Enhancement** and/or **Intervention Plans** and timeline must be submitted to the More at Four local contractor and the More at Four State Program.
 - d. Follow-up assessments contracted by the state office will be conducted to ensure the minimum rating is met.
 - e. Classrooms may be exempt from the Enhancement/Intervention Plan requirements if the teacher or classroom site has changed since the ECERS-R assessment occurred. However, such classrooms would be subject to a new assessment.

6. **Classrooms scoring the minimum or higher on the ECERS-R** will not be required to submit an **Enhancement Plan**. However, such classrooms would be subject to future assessments to ensure continued quality, which may occur in conjunction with the Division of Child Development license renewal process.

B. Reported Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations

The NC Division of Child Development will notify the NC Office of School Readiness anytime there is an open abuse and neglect investigation occurring in a More at Four site.

The More at Four Pre-K site in question may continue operating the More at Four classroom until the investigation and resolution is completed. If the allegation of abuse and/or neglect is substantiated, More at Four funds may be terminated where there is substantiation of abuse and neglect that jeopardize the health and safety of children enrolled in the program. In such cases, the termination of More at Four Program payments will continue through any appeals process and will not resume until a final determination has been made in the matter.

More at Four funds will be terminated when the participating More at Four Program's license has been summarily suspended or revoked, and may be suspended when there is a pending administrative action that would change its license.

C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local More at Four Pre-K Programs

The More at Four State Program, local contractors, and site administrators are required to monitor for compliance with the More at Four program and fiscal and contract guidelines and requirements. The monitoring process includes reviewing the child eligibility process, confirming that developmental screens and health assessments are completed, and checking other requirements as described to ensure that the guidelines are met.

1. **Monitoring Tools:** Monitoring tools developed by the More at Four State Program should be used at the local level for self-review and verification of compliance with the operating regulations and standards.
 - a. **More at Four Site Monitoring Tool (Site Tool), completed by the local site administrator (or designee),** is designed to provide checklists of those components of the program that must be reviewed for compliance annually at the site and classroom level.
 - b. **More at Four Contractor Monitoring Tool (Contractor Tool), completed by the local contractor (or designee),** is designed to provide checklists of those components of the program (both programmatic and fiscal) that must be reviewed for compliance annually at the local contractor level.
 - c. **Contractor and Site Tools** are organized by a specific program or fiscal guideline, lists of specific documentation required to support a cited guideline/standard (source column), and “Yes, No, N/A, and Plan” columns for self-monitoring. Supporting documentation, listed under the “source” column, should be available for review by More at Four State Program personnel during monitoring visits. **To download Tools see**
<http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Office/Education/Home.asp>

2. On-Site Visits: Regular visits by More at Four State Program personnel will be made to programs to ensure standards and documentation are in place with the program and fiscal regulations and standards, as well as to offer technical assistance to improve program quality.
3. Child and Program On-line Systems: Reporting and monitoring information may be obtained through the More at Four County Plan (MAFPLAN) and the More at Four Reporting System (MAFKids). These systems include extensive information about children, staff, and programs. Child information will include the necessary information required to support the State's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

Program and Fiscal Monitoring Responsibilities

Site Administrator Level

1. Each site must monitor its own program and classrooms on a regular basis using the **More at Four Site Monitoring Tool (Site Tool)**.
2. The **Site administrator** (or **designee**) monitors More at Four sites/classroom(s) and completes the **Site Tool**.
3. When a particular standard or requirement has not been met, each site should establish a written plan (including exceptions from the state office) to meet compliance, including defining who is responsible for accomplishing the task, a timeline, and other information to indicate progress toward meeting the requirement.
4. **By November 30th** of the program year, the site administrator completes, **signs (Section C. Assurance Statement)**, dates an original copy of the completed Site Tool, attaches written action plans for items not met, and submits to the local contractor. If a site or classroom becomes a More at Four site or classroom after October 1, a Site Tool should be completed and submitted to the local contractor within 90 days of the first attendance day at that site/classroom.
5. Information collected with this tool will be used by the local contractor to confirm, record, and report local site compliance to the More at Four State Program using the **More at Four Contractor Monitoring Tool (Contractor Tool)**.

Local Contractor Level

1. **Local contractors** monitor sites/classrooms and complete the **Contractor Monitoring Tool (Contractor Tool)**.
2. The **local contractor** (or designee) ensures that:
 - a. **By November 30th** an original copy of the **Site Tool** from each More at Four site is on file of the program year. (See **NOTE** in item 4, above.)
 - b. **Section D (Self-Monitoring)** on the More at Four **Contractor Tool** is completed using results from the Site Tool. Specific written action plans, timelines, exceptions from the state office, and information to indicate progress toward meeting a requirement for any site/classroom must be recorded and attached to the monitoring tool.

- c. The **Contractor Tool** will be made available to More at Four State Program personnel for review during a scheduled monitoring/compliance visit. Such visits will occur during the months of **February through April** of the program year. More at Four State Program personnel will contact the local contractor (or designee) to set a specific date and time to review monitoring results.
 - d. **No later than February 28th** of the program year, at least one annual site visit will be made to each More at Four program site/classroom. During the visit, the **Site Tool** should be discussed and validated by the local Contractor (or designee). For sites/classrooms that have not met specific guidelines, written plans, attached to the **Site Tool**, to meet compliance should be reviewed and monitored for completion. This may require additional classroom visits by the Contractor (or designee).
 - e. **By May 15, Sections E (Contractor Monitoring Visits) and F (Assurance Statement)** of the Contractor Tool are completed, signed, and dated. Any written action plans, timelines, exceptions from the state office, and other information to support progress toward standards not met are attached and mailed to the state office.
3. Results are reported to the local More at Four Committee prior to **May 1st** of the program year. Information included in the tool should be considered in planning for the upcoming program year.

State Level

1. **More at Four State Program personnel** will schedule monitoring visits during **February through April** to review results collected and documented, including action plans, on the **Contractor and Site Tools** by the county/region contractor.
2. **More at Four State Program personnel will:**
 - a. Validate that all requirements have either been met or plans for achieving compliance are in place. Validation is a process that requires comparing results reported on the monitoring tools (“Yes, No, N/A, Plan”) with the evidence to support the “Yes, No, N/A, Plan” selections. Validation occurs when there is agreement between what the local contractor (or designee) reports and what the monitor (state program personnel) reviews. If specific program or fiscal guidelines have not been met, plans and a timeline for meeting compliance will be discussed.
 - b. Confirm that the Contractor (or designee) will submit final monitoring results, summarized on the **Contractor Tool** with supporting plans for items not met, to the state office by **May 15**. This may require additional visits and/or other follow-up (Email communication, telephone calls, technical assistance visits) by the More at Four State Program to provide support in areas not fully implemented.
3. By **May 31**, More at Four State Program personnel reviews, signs, dates **Section G (State Office Validation)**, and returns a copy of the **Contractor Tool** to the local Contractor (or designee) along with any plans for meeting the program and fiscal standards.

4. An original copy of the tool will be maintained by the state office as evidence of guideline compliance.

Monitoring Timeline

Monitoring activities should begin with the start of each program year and continue throughout the year to ensure that program guidelines and requirements are met.

When	What	Who
By November 30	An original copy of the Site Tool is completed, and plans for items that require an Action Plan must be submitted to the Local Contractor.	Local site administrator or designee (site director or public school principal)
November - February	Complete Sections A through D on the Contractor Tool , including Action Plans and Timelines, as applicable. Conduct site visits to review and discuss Site Tool and results.	Local Contractor (or designee) Local Contractor (or designee)
By February 28	Complete site visits to all More at Four sites to review and discuss Site Tool results. Schedule follow-up visits as needed.	Local Contractor (or designee)
February - April	More at Four State program personnel visits local contract administrator to discuss/review Site Tools and Contractor Tool results.	MAF State Program Personnel
By May 15	Complete Contractor Tool (Sections E and F) , including Action Plans (timeline/who completes each task) for items that do not meet the Program and/or Fiscal Guidelines, sign, date, and mail to state office.	Local Contractor (or designee)
By May 31	MAF State program personnel complete Section G and mails copy of Contractor Tool to the local Contractor. (Original copy filed in the state office.) Monitoring results reported to the Local More at Four Committee	MAF State Program Personnel Local Contractor

D. Monitoring Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

State Responsibility

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds services and assistance to income-eligible families who have a child living in the home. The TANF block grant, administered by the State Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has an annual cost sharing requirement, referred to as the Maintenance of Effort requirement (MOE). Every federal fiscal year each state must spend a certain amount of its own money to help eligible families in ways that are consistent with the purpose of the TANF program. The More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program, designed to provide high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences that may allow parents to work, may count as MOE. (See *More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Fiscal and Contract Manual*.)

Local More at Four administrative programs are subject to monitoring visits by the DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis Office to verify children's eligibility for the TANF/MOE match. The Division of Budget and Analysis in conjunction with the State More at Four Program will select administrative programs for monitoring visits. Monitoring visits are not audits, but reviews of randomly selected child records, to ensure that funds to be counted as MOE meet the basic guidelines, as outlined in the *More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Fiscal and Contract Manual*. Criteria to be monitored are collected in the More at Four Reporting System (MAFKids) database, which are entered and updated monthly by the local More at Four program contract administrator. MAFKids determines if a child is TANF eligible. ***Only the state is impacted by the monitoring results. Local programs are not impacted fiscally by a finding of an ineligible TANF MOE child.***

Procedures include:

- a. The DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis and the More at Four State Program will work together to select a random sample of local More at Four programs and individual sites to be monitored.
- b. The DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis, in consultation with the More at Four State Program, will send a notification letter of a pending site visit with information about how the visit will be scheduled and conducted.
- c. Each local program will receive a list of clients' files to be monitored.
- d. Each local program may request a copy of the TANF/MOE Record Review Form and Record Review Guide as needed.

Local Responsibility

Periodically, local programs must verify and update child information in MAFKids. (MAFKids automatically determines TANF eligible children based on the data entered in

the system.) Local More at Four programs should inform eligible More at Four families, at the time of their enrollment into the program, that they should update the program if any of the following information changes during the More at Four program year. Families should be informed that More at Four services would continue for their child and would not be affected by the information update/change except where noted below with an asterisk (*).

- a. Name changes
- b. Child's living arrangement changes related to who has legal custody and/or guardianship of the child
- c. *If a child moves or relocates or leaves the program

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